



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

**Updated 2014**

## Contents

Acknowledgements.....	1
Introduction.....	1
What do we mean by “community engagement”? .....	2
Levels of community engagement – Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower.....	3
What’s the difference between communication and engagement?.....	3
Including everyone in the community .....	4
Using the Community Engagement Framework.....	4
The most important things to think about and put into practice .....	5
<b>1. Phase one – Planning for community engagement.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Step 1 – Work with decision makers .....	6
Step 2 – Clarify the decision to be made .....	6
Step 3 – Identify key stake holders.....	6
Step 4 – Consider legislative requirements .....	7
Step 5 – Select a level of community engagement .....	7
Step 6 – Set up and maintain a community engagement record.....	7
Step 7 – Establish evaluation measures. ....	7
<b>2. Phase two – Developing and implementing a community engagement strategy .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Step 1 – Gather and record background information .....	8
Step 2 – Define community engagement objectives.....	8
Step 3 – Establish community engagement parameters.....	8
Step 4 – Identify key issues / interests and responses.....	8
Step 5 – Select suitable techniques for community engagement.....	9
Step 6- Develop an Action Plan and Task Breakdown.....	9
Step 7-Evaluate Phase Two .....	9
<b>3. Phase three – Providing feedback to stakeholders and reporting to Council.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Step 1 – Collate and analyse information.....	10
Step 2 – Prepare a Feedback Report for stakeholders.....	10
Step 3 – Prepare a Report for Council .....	10
Step 4 – Implementation of the final decision .....	11
Step 5 – Evaluate Phase Three .....	11
References.....	12
Useful websites.....	12
Appendices .....	13
Appendix 1 – Community Engagement Flowchart .....	14
Appendix 2 – Community Engagement Checklist .....	15
Appendix 3 – Community Engagement Techniques .....	23
Appendix 4 - IAP2 spectrum of public participation.....	30
Appendix 5 – Engagement Action Plan .....	31
Appendix 6 – Community Engagement Evaluation Plan Template.....	32
Appendix 7 – Mount Alexander Shire Community Engagement Policy.....	33
Appendix 8 – The Role of Councillors in Community Engagement.....	36
Appendix 9 – Budget Template .....	37
Appendix 10 – Youth Engagement Charter.....	38
Appendix 11 – Gender Equity Statement.....	39

## Acknowledgements

Community engagement is not a new concept. Considerable work has been undertaken by state agencies and local governments to define community engagement and provide useful tools for local government to use for effective community engagement. This Framework builds on this body of work, in particular the *Community Engagement Handbook: A Model Framework for leading practice in Local Government in South Australia (2008)*<sup>1</sup> and the City of Greater Bendigo's *Community Engagement Guidelines*. The opportunity to adapt and adopt content already developed is gratefully acknowledged.

Councillors and officers at Mount Alexander Shire Council (Council) have also helped shape Council's Community Engagement Policy and Framework. This has been through:

- Workshop with Councillors to determine principles for community engagement and reflect on current and desired practice;
- Input from council officers who are members of the Community Engagement and Consultation Practice Group;
- Input from the project control group which provided oversight for the development of Council's Community Engagement Policy and Framework; and
- Learnings from Council's Youth Engagement Project.

## Introduction

This Framework has been developed to support the implementation of Council's Community Engagement Policy. Council is committed to engaging with the community and ensuring clear and thorough communication through all community engagement undertakings.

Community engagement is good for individual and community wellbeing and is also good for governments. There is a body of literature that can demonstrate connections between community or civic engagement and wellbeing<sup>2</sup>. There are also well documented examples of how community engagement, through community governance or participatory democracy methods improve outcomes for all levels of government<sup>3</sup>. A recent report "Evolution in Community Governance: Building on What Works"<sup>4</sup> defines community governance as a "collaborative approach to determining a community's preferred futures and developing and implementing the means of realising them".

Democratic governance exists when Council governs for and on behalf of its local community. Engagement between Council and the community aims to better understand the aspirations of communities and provides people with ways to have input into the processes of setting priorities and future directions for Council. Council needs to ensure that all groups in the Shire have an equal opportunity to participate and be engaged in Council processes.

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<sup>1</sup> Produced for Local Government Association of South Australia and Government of South Australia, Project consultants Margaret Heylen and Barbara Chappell.

<sup>2</sup> Cuthill, M (2003) "the Contribution of Human and Social Capital to Building Community Wellbeing: A research Agenda relating to Citizen Participation in Local Governance in Australia" *Urban Policy and Research*, Vol.21, No.4, 373-391

<sup>3</sup> ABS (2010) 1370.0 - Measures of Australia's Progress, Civic Participation 2010 Latest ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 15/09/2010 [http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1370.0~2010~Chapter~Civic%20participation%20\(4.6.7.2\)](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1370.0~2010~Chapter~Civic%20participation%20(4.6.7.2))

<sup>4</sup> McKinlay, P., Pillora, S., Tan, S.F., Von Tunsellmann, A. 2011. Evolution in Community Governance: Building on What Works. Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, University of Technology, Sydney.

Good community engagement should:

- Lead to better decisions;
- Ensure stronger community ownership;
- Mean there is greater likelihood of sharing the benefits and reducing win/lose outcomes;
- Build a stronger relationship between Council and the community;
- Encourage a significant number of stakeholders to participate; and
- Build community leadership and resilience.

Community engagement is essential for Council to effectively fulfil its role. *The Local Government Act 1989 Section 3D* outlines the following role for Council:

- (1) A Council is elected to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community.
- (2) The role of a Council includes-
  - (a) Acting as a representative government by taking into account the diverse needs of the local community in decision making;
  - (b) Providing leadership by establishing strategic objectives and monitoring their achievements;
  - (c) Maintaining the viability of the Council by ensuring that resources are managed in a responsible and accountable manner;
  - (d) Advocating the interests of the local community to other communities and governments;
  - (e) Acting as a responsible partner in government by taking into account the needs of other communities; and
  - (f) Fostering community cohesion and encouraging active participation in civic life.

Feedback on Council's current community engagement practice and expectations for future engagement was provided by community members from two workshops held in August 2012. This will inform the implementation of this Framework.

## **What do we mean by “community engagement”?**

Community engagement is defined by the International Association for Public Participation Australasia (IAP2) as a two way process by which:

- the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of citizens and communities are incorporated at all levels and in all sectors in policy development, planning, decision-making, service delivery and assessment; and
- governments and other business and civil society organisations involve citizens, clients, communities and other stakeholders in these processes<sup>5</sup>.

Community engagement is not the same as community consultation, even though the terms are often used interchangeably. This can lead to unrealistic expectations and confusion. Consultation is only one level of engagement, along with inform, involve, collaborate and empower. These levels of engagement are explained in the following section.

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<sup>5</sup> IAP2 Brisbane Declaration <http://www.iap2.org.au/resources/un-declaration/the-united-nations-brisbane-declaration> accessed 3/05/12.

## Levels of community engagement – Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower

This Framework is based on a model developed by the IAP2, the Spectrum of Public Participation. The IAP2 term ‘public participation’ is referred to as community engagement in this Framework. The IAP2 model identifies and defines various levels of community engagement, from informing people through to empowering them. In the context of local government, these levels of engagement can be defined as follows:

Inform	One way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened.
Consult	Two way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives and proposals to inform decision making.
Involve	Participatory processes designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision making.
Collaborate	Working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.
Empower	Providing opportunities and resources for communities to contribute to solutions by valuing local talents and skills and acknowledging their capacity to be decision makers in their own lives.

This Community Engagement Framework outlines Council’s role, as the decision maker under the *Local Government Act 1989*, in engaging with the community to make good decisions. Therefore the term ‘empower’ in this framework sits at an operational level, rather than at a decision making level. Empowering in the context of this Framework is about Council’s community development and community capacity building initiatives.

### What’s the difference between communication and engagement?

The first level of community engagement is purely to inform the community which is one way communication. Communication is of course also required to let people know about opportunities and outcomes from more interactive levels of engagement. Clear concise targeted communication is imperative to a successful community engagement process and an Engagement Action Plan (Appendix 5) is the first step towards achieving this.

The level of participation required in the engagement process will determine the communication tools and methods to be used. Monitoring and evaluation of the communication methods during the engagement process will provide valuable insight and the opportunity for continuous improvement. There will be an emphasis placed on the need to feed back the results of engagement to the participants to ensure the reasons for decisions are clearly articulated and shared with those who have an interest in the focus of the engagement.

A range of traditional and digital media will be used in community engagement communications in order to achieve the communication objectives. Council will consistently review and improve techniques and approaches for sharing information across a range of media to achieve the best outcomes and to avoid investing time and resources in unproductive areas.

## Including everyone in the community

During the community engagement workshops held with members of the community in August 2012, the term community was discussed. It was acknowledged that the word community has a number of meanings as can refer to how people are connected by place or by interest. The challenge for Council when embarking on community engagement is to understand and include all the layers of community.

Young people have been identified as a demographic group that Council would like to engage with on a more consistent basis. To improve this, Council has undertaken the Youth Engagement Project which has resulted in the development of Council's Youth Engagement Charter (Appendix 10). The Youth Engagement Charter has been written by young people within the Shire who have identified key terms to consider when engaging with young people within community consultations.

Through the Youth Engagement Project, it was found that young people's inclusion within decision making processes prove to be somewhat more challenging, depending upon such factors as access to transport, opportunities for young people being promoted and encouraged within their communities, and financial restrictions.

Ideological beliefs about the child and young people and their capacity to participate in decision making processes (designed and created by adults) have created additional barriers to civic participation for young people. The need to advocate for and promote opportunities for young people to engage in decision making processes is therefore unique. Barriers and attitudes about young people that prevent their participation need to be addressed and acknowledged before effective engagement and civic participation with young people can begin.

Although it shares many similarities with adult participation, engaging young people within decision making processes, needs to be respectful of young people, and consider the barriers and challenges which prevent young people from exercising their right to participate. The Youth Development Officer is available to assist and advise staff on how to engage young people.

Additionally, more equitable outcomes will be reached by including a gendered analysis across all age groups into the engagement process. This helps to ensure that hidden gendered assumptions don't go unchecked and inequalities aren't perpetuated. This will result in equality of opportunity across all ages and genders.

The Framework prompts staff to consider all possible stakeholders at the outset of the engagement process and then consider ways to include people throughout the engagement process. This is also supported by Council's Universal Access and Equity Policy. Council's Rural Access Officer is available to assist and advise staff on how to engage with people with a disability. Council's Disability Advisory Group is also a useful forum to assist in engaging with people with disabilities.

## Using the Community Engagement Framework

This Framework is developed around three phases of community engagement:

1. Planning to engage;
2. Developing and implementing the engagement strategy; and
3. Providing feedback and reporting to Council.

The Framework describes the main tasks and considerations for each phase. There is also a checklist for each phase in the appendices, designed for easy usage and to ensure a thorough process. Additional supportive materials are provided in the appendices section such as community engagement techniques, planning templates and other references.

It is intended that this Framework be used in conjunction with complementary Council processes and frameworks. These include:

- Youth Engagement Charter
- Community Engagement Community of Practice Group
- Local Community Planning Project
- Staff values
- Customer Service Action Plan
- Social Media Policy
- Project Plan and Management Processes
- Universal Access & Equity Policy
- Gender Equity Statement

### **The most important things to think about and put into practice**

Community engagement is part of Council's practice, not an extra thing to add onto a project. During the development of this Framework, Councillors and community members made several comments that are helpful to bear in mind when planning and undertaking community engagement. These points are:

- ! Include Councillors at the outset of any engagement process so they are clear about the issue, the level of engagement that will occur (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower) and the methods that will be used.
- ! Be very clear at the outset of engagement with community members about the level of engagement expected, what is negotiable and what it not negotiable.
- ! Allow as much time as possible for people to consider the context and the options.
- ! Don't work in isolation, keep Council (Councillors and officers) informed of the engagement process.
- ! Make sure people know how feedback on their input will be provided and make sure you follow through on this.

# 1. Phase one – Planning for community engagement

## Step 1 – Work with decision makers

Council has the legislated responsibility of making the final decision; therefore it is important to clarify Councillors' expectations and their role in community engagement and to gain their commitment to the process as early as possible. There are also others who may impact on decisions at an operational level.

- ✓ Clarify the roles of decision makers and when and how they will make decisions.
- ✓ Acknowledge the elected body of Council as the final decision maker.
- ✓ Identify who else may make operational decisions or recommendations to decision makers throughout the community engagement process.
- ✓ Meet with Councillors as early as possible to clarify their expectations and gain their commitment to the process.
- ✓ Clarify the expectations of internal stakeholders (Council officers and Executive Management Team if necessary) and decision makers and key external stakeholders.
- ✓ Ensure project planning includes designated officers responsible for community engagement planning.

## Step 2 – Clarify the decision to be made

Being unclear is a common reason for tension between Councils and communities and why some issues seem to remain unresolved over a long period of time. Ask those involved in the planning process what they think is the decision to be made.

- ✓ Be clear about the decision to be made.
- ✓ Meet with other Council officers to clarify the decision that needs to be made.
- ✓ Draft a decision statement.
- ✓ Meet with external key stakeholders to gather information on their perspective of the decision to be made.
- ✓ Redefine the decision statement so it can be accepted by the majority of stakeholders.

## Step 3 – Identify key stake holders

A stakeholder is someone who may be affected by or have a significant interest in the decision under consideration. Consider the different levels of stakeholders including those with a direct interest, those with a general interest and others such as peak bodies and other government authorities or agencies. Consideration should also be given in accordance with Council's *Universal Access and Equity Policy* to include people who may not have easy access to engagement processes.

- ✓ Consider how to recruit potential stakeholders.
- ✓ Develop a list of potential stakeholders and their level of interest.
- ✓ Remember to include or consult with other Council units where relevant.
- ✓ Meet with key stakeholders as early as possible in the process and work with them to develop the list further.

- ✓ Consider ways to identify potential hard to reach stakeholders and maximise their opportunities for participation.
- ✓ Do not underestimate the knowledge, skills and interests of young people. Refer to Council's *Youth Engagement Charter* (Appendix 10) for ways to include young people in engagement processes.
- ✓ Consider ways of ensuring a gender balance.

#### Step 4 – Consider legislative requirements

Some community engagement processes will need to accommodate statutory obligations of Council.

- ✓ Identify and communicate to stakeholders any legislative requirements that impact on the community engagement process.
- ✓ Be clear about the distinction between the specific steps taken to meet legislative requirements as opposed to any additional steps taken to engage the community more broadly.

#### Step 5 – Select a level of community engagement

The selection of a level or levels of community engagement will be driven by the expectations of internal and external stakeholders. Consideration also needs to be given to the resources available for community engagement activities.

- ✓ Understand the expectations of internal and external stakeholders.
- ✓ Understand the values of stakeholders, which drive the expectations.
- ✓ Refer to the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation to review the goals and promises for each level of community engagement.
- ✓ Determine the level or levels of community engagement that will suit the majority of stakeholders.

#### Step 6 – Set up and maintain a community engagement record

It is important to maintain a record of documents used and produced throughout the community engagement process. The benefits of this include: easy access to information for project teams; project continuity following any staff changes; and good time management as a result of effective document retrieval.

- ✓ Set up a list of documents that need to be maintained during the community engagement process.
- ✓ Ensure all community engagement records are maintained in TRIM according to Council's business classification scheme and document naming protocols.

#### Step 7 – Establish evaluation measures.

The methodology used should include quantitative and qualitative measures. Evaluation can consider the process and the outcome. Think about what the engagement is intended to achieve and how this will be measured.

- ✓ Develop evaluation measures that suit the scope of the community engagement process.
- ✓ Consider how to evaluate the process and use this information to improve outcomes.

- ✓ Use a template to simply and clearly record evaluation measures.

## 2. Phase two – Developing and implementing a community engagement strategy

### Step 1 – Gather and record background information

Background information helps tell the story and set the scene for the community engagement. Background information should include the history, current status and information on what needs to happen to address the decision that needs to be made.

- ✓ Refer to a range of sources to gather background information including: Council reports and briefings; council records; Councillors; Council officers; community groups and individuals; and other stakeholders.
- ✓ Provide background information in an easy to read format (e.g. FAQs) to inform people participating in the community engagement process.

### Step 2 – Define community engagement objectives

Objectives should be set for each level of community engagement selected and evaluated to ensure they are being met.

- ✓ Include the community engagement objectives in the Community Engagement Plan (Appendix 5).
- ✓ Use the list of positive and negative impacts from the Phase One Checklist (Appendix 2) to develop the community engagement action plan.

### Step 3 – Establish community engagement parameters

Parameters provide a clear description of the limitations, the negotiable and the non-negotiables involved in a project. The key parameters to consider are:

- ✓ Legislative
- ✓ Geographic boundaries
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Timelines

### Step 4 – Identify key issues / interests and responses

Issues and levels of interest will emerge as work with stakeholders progresses through the planning process. These matters need to be identified as early as possible and response strategies developed for them.

- ✓ Speak directly to stakeholders to identify key issues and interests.
- ✓ Document the likely positions of different stakeholders and acknowledge how there are different perspectives.
- ✓ Develop strategies to respond to different positions of interest and bring people to common ground.

### Step 5 – Select suitable techniques for community engagement

A community engagement technique is used to facilitate engagement or interaction with the community, such as a workshop, questionnaire or a public forum. When selecting appropriate techniques:

- ✓ Reflect on the planning so far, including the community engagement objectives that have been identified.
- ✓ Think about how to maximise participation in the community engagement process.
- ✓ Think about the most effective and efficient ways to reach different groups and stakeholders.
- ✓ Refer to the community engagement techniques in Appendix Three.
- ✓ Refer to Council's *Youth Engagement Charter* (Appendix 10).
- ✓ Consider privacy and consent requirements.

### Step 6- Develop an Action Plan and Task Breakdown

The action plan and task breakdown build on the planning work undertaken so far and document how the community engagement objectives will be achieved in accordance with the parameters that have been identified.

- ✓ Make sure responsible officers are identified for each task and that resources are allocated for the tasks.
- ✓ The Communications Budget Template (Appendix 9) can assist in working through costs.
- ✓ Set significant dates and establish deadlines.
- ✓ Consider Council reporting timelines when setting deadlines.
- ✓ Use the community Engagement Action Plan (Appendix 5).
- ✓ Make sure all council staff involved in the community engagement process have access to the action plan.

### Step 7-Evaluate Phase Two

Examples of evaluation measure for this phase might be:

- ✓ What will indicate the action plan is being coordinated effectively?
- ✓ Is the action plan making sure the community engagement objectives are met?
- ✓ Have all the identified stakeholders been engaged?
- ✓ Are records of the community engagement being maintained?

### 3. Phase three – Providing feedback to stakeholders and reporting to Council

#### Step 1 – Collate and analyse information

The collation and analysis of information should have been considered in the earlier planning process. Additional resources may be required for data input and or data analysis if surveys have been undertaken.

- ✓ Aim for a consistent format for collating information that is easy for staff to use.
- ✓ Ensure the format makes sense for stakeholders and decision makers.

#### Step 2 – Prepare a Feedback Report for stakeholders

Being able to report back on how stakeholder feedback has influenced the decision making process demonstrates democracy at work and the value of stakeholder input. A feedback report should include the following:

- ✓ Introduction and background information.
- ✓ Outcomes from the community engagement process including any key issues or trends identified.
- ✓ Qualitative and quantitative data.
- ✓ Exact words and phrases used by people in comments to ensure they recognise their own input.
- ✓ A section for questions raised by the community and responses from Council.
- ✓ A summary of how the information has been analysed with any clear outcomes or indications of a division or a preferred outcome.
- ✓ Consider suitable techniques to distribute a feedback report to various stakeholders.

#### Step 3 – Prepare a Report for Council

The Council report provides a clear picture to Councillors of the community engagement process, its outcomes and how this might impact on the decision to be made. Community engagement is not the only consideration for Council when making a decision. The report to Council should:

- ✓ Restate the decision to be made as identified at the start of the community engagement process.
- ✓ Provide clear and succinct feedback from the community.
- ✓ Clarify any key issues, trends or strongly held views.
- ✓ Provide a summary of the key community engagement activities undertaken for each level of community engagement.
- ✓ Provide a summary of other factors Council needs to consider in the decision making process such as environmental, economic impacts and the policy environment.
- ✓ Make clear recommendations based on the information provided throughout the report.

#### Step 4 – Implementation of the final decision

Consideration should be given to how the decision will be implemented and how this will be communicated.

- ✓ Include the strategy for implementation in the Council report for endorsement, which will add to the sustainability of the decision.
- ✓ Build implementation actions into Council's reporting processes such as TRIM and CID where possible.

#### Step 5 – Evaluate Phase Three

Some evaluation questions to consider are:

- ✓ Have participants been advised of how their input was used?
- ✓ Does the Council report provide a clear picture of the community engagement processes used and the information obtained from these processes?
- ✓ Is there a way to monitor the implementation of the decision?

## References

- Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, *Evolution in Community Governance, Building on What Works*, February 2012
- City of Greater Bendigo, *Community Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit*. April 2011
- Local Government Association of South Australia, *Community Engagement Handbook: A Model Framework for leading practice in Local Government in South Australia*, March 2008
- Nicola Brackertz & Denise Meredyth, *Social Inclusion of the Hard to Reach*, 2008

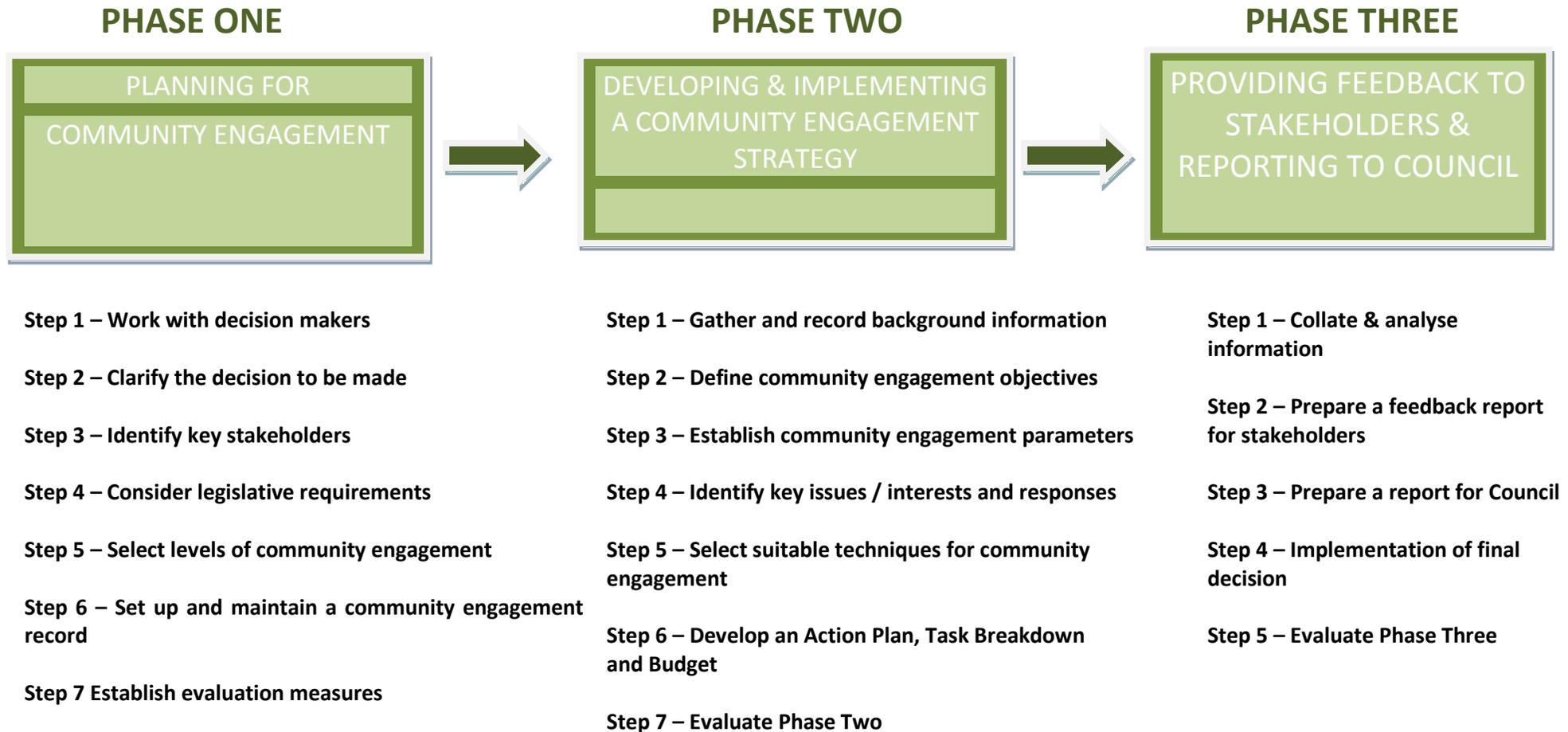
## Useful websites

- DSE, Book 2: The Engagement Planning Work Book, Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, [www.dse.vic.gov.au/engage](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/engage)
- IAP2 Toolkit- [www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org)
- Queensland Government - [www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au](http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au) - Engaging Queenslanders: Evaluating community engagement
- Victoria Local Governance Association - [www.vlga.org.au](http://www.vlga.org.au)

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 Community Engagement Flowchart
- Appendix 2 Community Engagement Checklists (phase one, two and three)
- Appendix 3 Community Engagement Techniques
- Appendix 4 IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum
- Appendix 5 Engagement Action Plan
- Appendix 6 Community Engagement Evaluation Plan Template
- Appendix 7 Community Engagement Policy
- Appendix 8 Role of Council Members in Community Engagement Processes
- Appendix 9 Budget Template
- Appendix 10 Youth Engagement Charter
- Appendix:11 Gender Equity Statement

## Appendix 1 – Community Engagement Flowchart



## Appendix 2 – Community Engagement Checklist

Name of Project/Issue/Task:	Date: _____  Proposed date of Community Engagement: _____
Contact person:	Team/Unit:

### ***PHASE 1 Planning for Community Engagement***

#### **Identifying the project/issue/task**

In a sentence or two, describe the project/issue/task:

Identify the proposed changes to the level of service to the community from the project/issue/task:

In one sentence, identify the DECISION that needs to be made:

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#### **Identify the aims of the engagement**

Identify the practical purpose of the engagement process (ie. What do you want to have by the end – a decision / document / commitment / next step etc):

Identify the experience you would like the participants to take away from the process (ie. Feeling heard, seeing their input influence a decision, a clear understanding of issues, hearing different perspectives)

**Will the Community Engagement be ‘open’ or ‘closed’?**

Open ..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Closed ..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Other..... <input type="checkbox"/>
An open Community Engagement process allows community members to assist with setting the parameters of the issues relating to the project	A closed Community Engagement process asks community members to respond to identified solutions, usually with an ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ option.	(eg. Elements of both open and closed engagement):
NOTE: It is important to ensure that community members understand whether or not your engagement process is ‘open’ or ‘closed’ and for you to design your process accordingly. For example, do not ask an open question about an issue if you only want a yes or no answer to a set of predetermined solution.		

**From your perspective, list the possible positive and negative impacts**

Positive impacts / outcomes:	Negative impacts / outcomes:
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
NOTE: For the negative impacts, consider the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the potential severity of this impact / outcome occurring?</li> <li>2. What is the probability of this impact / outcome occurring?</li> <li>3. What is the possible reach of this impact / outcome within the community?</li> </ol> Consider how these risks might be mitigated.	

**Consider the level of overall risk:**

Is there likelihood for political sensitivity, community outrage or other harm?

**Consider the level of complexity:**

Is the project/issue easy to understand or complex in nature?

Level of Risk			Level of Complexity		
H	M	L	H	M	L

NOTE: The higher the risk the greater the need for higher level of participation

NOTE: The more complex the issue, the greater the need for deliberative participation

**Who are the specific stakeholders?**

Tick which of the following community members you would think could be affected by this project/issue

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent Residents</li> <li>• Non-permanent Residents</li> <li>• Other _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Community groups</li> <li>• Business groups</li> <li>• External agencies</li> <li>• Government Departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culturally &amp; Linguistically Diverse</li> <li>• Indigenous Australians</li> <li>• People with Disabilities</li> <li>• Aged</li> <li>• Young families</li> <li>• Early Years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Men</li> <li>• Women</li> <li>• Other:</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>
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**Who needs to be involved in planning?**

Consider whose advice or input is required to plan your community engagement

<p>I'm happy to do the planning myself (with or without some support).</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I'd like to get another Council officer or an internal working group to assist with the planning process.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>An independent external consultant/facilitator should assist with developing the process.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I'm not sure who needs to be involved in the planning (see your supervisor for advice).</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
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**Who needs to be involved in undertaking the process?**

Consider who will facilitate your engagement process.

<p>I'm happy to do it myself (with or without some support).</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I'd like to get another Council officer or an internal team to assist with the process, so I can focus on the content.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>An independent external consultant/facilitator should run the process.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>I'm not sure who needs to be involved in running the process (see your supervisor for advice).</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
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## Who can participate?

Is the process open to all, or are random targeted or representative invites necessary?

Open to everyone in a given community to participate. <input type="checkbox"/>	Targeted to certain groups / stakeholders. <input type="checkbox"/>	Random invites (to gain previously unheard perspectives). <input type="checkbox"/>	Stratified random sample (to gain perspective representative of wider community). <input type="checkbox"/>
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## Levels of participation.

Based on the potential negative impacts and overall risk, and the complexity of the issue, choose an appropriate level of participation. This will assist with the design of your process.

Inform..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Consult..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Involve..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Collaborate..... <input type="checkbox"/>	Empower..... <input type="checkbox"/>
Provide balanced & objective information.	Seek feedback on alternatives and/or decision.	Work directly with the community during the process to ensure needs are considered.	Partner with the community during each aspect of decision making.	Final decision making power sits with community.
<b>Promise to</b> keep community informed.	<b>Promise to</b> keep community informed, listen to issues & provide feedback as to how input affected the decision.	<b>Promise to</b> ensure aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives and provide feedback as to how input affected the decision.	<b>Promise to</b> look to the community for advice and incorporate this advice into alternatives.	<b>Promise to</b> implement what the community decides.
<b>Examples of techniques</b>				
More techniques are available in Appendix 3.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Mail out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Public meetings</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Deliberative polling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Committees</li> <li>• Consensus building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens' Jury</li> <li>• Ballots</li> </ul>

## PHASE 2 Designing and implementing a Community Engagement Plan

### Choosing a process/technique

Go to the Community Engagement Techniques (Appendix 3) and select an appropriate technique(s) for the engagement process, as determined by the level of participation you are hoping to achieve. You may choose more than one technique. Refer to Council's *Youth Engagement Charter* (Appendix 10) for specific guidelines around engaging young people.

Method(s) chosen:

### Gaining support from decision makers

Indicate who you will need to gain approval from.

I need support from my direct supervisor.  <input type="checkbox"/>	I need EMT to sign off on the process.  <input type="checkbox"/>	I need to inform Council/undertake a Council briefing.  <input type="checkbox"/>	I'm not sure who needs to approve this (see your supervisor for advice).  <input type="checkbox"/>
---	--	--	--

### Develop an action plan

Use your selected techniques to detail a step by step plan.

Use this Who, What, When, Where, How framework to list all the things that need to be covered.

WHO?	WHAT?	WHEN?	WHERE?	HOW?
...needs to be there, know about it, help out? How will I keep the rest of Council informed of this engagement process and its outcomes?	...contribution can people make?	...will it take place, will results be known? Etc	...should we meet, should we advertise? Etc	...will I communicate, obtain relevant input? Etc
NOTE: There are many people and tools available to assist with this design process.				

### Establish Evaluation Measures

Use these questions as a guide to assist with developing an evaluation.

Some larger projects may require a full evaluation plan.

**What needs to happen for this process to be a 'success'?** (Consider the perspectives of both Council and Community/other stakeholders):

**How will you know if this has been achieved?** (ie. The visible signs of 'success'):

**What data will you need to indicate this?** (what will you need to demonstrate the results):

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**How will you collect this data?** (participant feedback, surveys, informal discussions etc):

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**How will you document the learnings (both positive and negative) from this process, for future learning for yourself and others in the Council?**

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**ACTION!**

You've got objectives, you know your stakeholders and you've thought about how they can participate, you've chosen a technique, developed an action plan and thought about how you'll evaluate once it's all done – the next step is to put all this work into action! Good luck!

Use the information you have worked through to put in the Engagement Action Plan (Appendix 5)

## PHASE 3 Reporting and Evaluation

**Collate and analyse your data** - To be completed AFTER the engagement process

Following your Community Engagement process, you will need to collate the data you have obtained, as per your evaluation questions (or Evaluation Plan if you completed one).

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**Report to decision makers** - To be completed AFTER the engagement process

Use your evaluative data to compile a report that reflects on the process as well as the outcome you obtain. Reflect on the objectives and aims that you set out at the beginning of the Community Engagement process to assess your process. It can be useful to think about and document what you would do differently next time.

---

### Feedback to participants/stakeholders

Communicate the outcomes of the process to participants.

Letter/email sent directly to all participants  <input type="checkbox"/>	Follow up meeting  <input type="checkbox"/>	Website/mass media  <input type="checkbox"/>	Other:  <input type="checkbox"/>
NOTE: ensure you obtain relevant contact information and advise participants of how/when you will be communicating with them.			

### Is ongoing communication required?

Where projects occur after the engagement process, progress updates to be provided.

How will you continue to communicate with participants (and the wider community) about the progress of the project?

---

Will the implementation of the project sit with another area of Council Yes  No

Identify the Units/teams you may need to be in contact with to obtain updated information:

Notes:

**Approval / sign off**

If required, record the agreement between you and your supervisor to undertake this Community Engagement process.

<p>I will undertake a Community Engagement process as per the information contained in this checklist.</p> <p>Officer name: _____</p> <p>Officer signature: _____</p>	<p>I have read and support the use of this Community Engagement Plan.</p> <p>Supervisor name: _____</p> <p>Supervisor signature: _____</p>
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## Appendix 3 – Community Engagement Techniques

**TABLE 1 – Engagement techniques for INFORM level**

Consider techniques for <b>INFORM</b> level	<b>Always Think It Through</b>	<b>What Can Go Right</b>	<b>What Can Go Wrong</b>
<p>Printed Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact Sheets</li> <li>• Newsletter</li> <li>• Media Advertising – local papers</li> <li>• Brochures</li> <li>• Issue Papers</li> <li>• Letters</li> <li>• Media Releases</li> <li>• Media Conference</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep it short &amp; simple</li> <li>• Make it visually interesting and engaging but not too busy or slick</li> <li>• Proof read all documents</li> <li>• Ask randomly selected staff members to trial material &amp; provide feedback before distribution to the public</li> <li>• Use language that is inclusive and jargon free</li> <li>• Always include opportunities for comment and include reply paid forms or envelopes to encourage two-way communication</li> <li>• Explain public role and how comments have affected project decisions</li> <li>• Offer interpretation services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can reach a large target audience</li> <li>• Public look for information in regular format eg. Newsletter, Media column</li> <li>• Allows for technical &amp; legal reviews</li> <li>• Written comments returned in reply paid format</li> <li>• Documentation of public involvement facilitated</li> <li>• Mailing list development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution planning inadequate</li> <li>• Materials do not reach the mark</li> <li>• Materials not read</li> <li>• Limited capacity to communicate complicated concepts</li> <li>• Information misinterpreted</li> </ul>
<p>Displays</p> <p>Council Offices</p> <p>Libraries</p> <p>Community Centres</p> <p>Shopping centre</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Childcare centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish regular sites if possible to build on community culture</li> <li>• Develop a distribution list</li> <li>• Make sure personnel at locations know what materials are about &amp; where they are located &amp; who to contact for further information</li> <li>• Consider electronic displays, eg. Touch screens, TV video loop presentations</li> <li>• Make sure materials are removed when past their use by date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information is accessible to the public at relatively little cost</li> <li>• Public use the distribution locations to look for materials</li> <li>• Public visit Council facilities &amp; may learn more about service provision</li> <li>• Public ask for further information at Council distribution sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution sites are overcrowded with information &amp; the materials get lost among the collection of materials</li> <li>• There is no active promotion of the materials</li> <li>• Upkeep of information at sites is not well managed</li> </ul>
<p>Website &amp; Online Media</p> <p>Information directly into the household</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs to be visible &amp; easy to navigate</li> <li>• Keep information updated</li> <li>• Consider using Council Youth Services Facebook pages to inform young people and feedback after consultations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capable of reaching a large audience at low cost</li> <li>• Popular information resource</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People without access disadvantaged</li> <li>• Technical difficulties</li> <li>• Hard to navigate</li> </ul>

**TABLE 2 – Engagement techniques for CONSULT level**

Consider techniques for <b>CONSULT</b> level	<b>Always Think It Through</b>	<b>What Can Go Right</b>	<b>What Can Go Wrong</b>
<b>Printed Materials, Displays, Website</b>	Refer to Table 1	Refer to Table 1	Refer to Table 1
<b>Briefings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Staff</li> <li>• Councillors</li> <li>• Technicians</li> <li>• Consultants</li> <li>• Key Stakeholders</li> <li>• Community groups (including marginalised groups)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep it short &amp; simple</li> <li>• Use clear, jargon free, inclusive language</li> <li>• Use easy to read diagrams and visuals that are consistent with the verbal &amp; written content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control of information / presentation</li> <li>• Opportunities to clarify misinformation</li> <li>• Reach a wider variety of people</li> <li>• Build community capacity</li> <li>• Evaluate &amp; readjust approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some groups may be left out of briefings</li> <li>• Inaccurate information may be passed on to community</li> <li>• Expectations may be raised</li> <li>• Information may be used inappropriately</li> </ul>
<b>Mailed and Online Surveys/Questionnaires/Response Sheets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blanket distribution</li> <li>• Random distribution</li> <li>• Selected distribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys/Questionnaires should be developed using specific guidelines and trialled before distribution</li> <li>• Collection and method of analysis to be considered &amp; clarified</li> <li>• Level of engagement &amp; parameters need to be clear</li> <li>• Liaise with Council IT services to use Survey Monkey to develop online surveys</li> <li>• Council teams have existing email databases and social media pages that can be used to distribute online surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can gather information from people other than those with special interest</li> <li>• Gather information from people who might not attend meetings</li> <li>• Can gather specific information</li> <li>• Statistically tested results have more credibility</li> <li>• Online surveys can assist with data analysis</li> <li>• Engagement is not restricted by time or location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response rate can be poor</li> <li>• Communities over surveyed</li> <li>• Can be labour intensive</li> <li>• Questions may be misinterpreted</li> <li>• Results not trusted</li> <li>• Results not fed back to communities effectively</li> </ul>
<b>Forums</b> Can be used to both inform and consult by including presentations by Council staff and key stakeholders and interactive workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear objectives are important</li> <li>• Consider involving relevant stakeholders in the planning process</li> <li>• May be necessary to hold a specific youth forum to ensure young people feel confident to have their voices heard</li> <li>• Consider the number of staff required to make the event successful</li> <li>• Consider the atmosphere of the venue to make it more inviting and welcoming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can involve a large number of people in the same space, share ideas and learn from each other</li> <li>• Young people can gain skills in planning and participating in large scale events</li> <li>• Creates positive media opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost can be high.</li> <li>• Can be resource intensive</li> </ul>

Consider techniques for <b>CONSULT</b> level	<b>Always Think It Through</b>	<b>What Can Go Right</b>	<b>What Can Go Wrong</b>
<b>Informal Discussions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can happen in a variety of settings</li> <li>• Can involve a small group of people or can occur with individuals</li> <li>• Can provide input to assist with planning for engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure effective information recording methods</li> <li>• Method of analysis to be considered</li> <li>• Consultation may need to occur after hours and on weekends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to organise, requiring little resources</li> <li>• Consulting people at venues which they already attend may lead to more effective engagement</li> <li>• Informality makes people involved feel comfortable</li> <li>• Consulting in spaces that the community uses provides accessible consultation</li> <li>• Gather information from people who might not attend meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results not fed back to communities effectively</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Assistance</b> <b>Attendance at:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefings</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical resource persons must be perceived as credible by communities</li> <li>• Ensure technical resource persons have access to information about the communities attitudes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build credibility &amp; address public concerns about equity</li> <li>• Facts in dispute can be debated &amp; consensus reached</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource availability may be limited</li> <li>• Technicians may not be prepared for working too closely with communities &amp; may lack empathy with community concerns</li> </ul>
<b>Open House</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities engage at their own pace in a comfortable environment</li> <li>• Drop in to individually view plans, ask questions, give opinions have an informal chat &amp; a coffee, tea etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be there when you say you are going to be there</li> <li>• Consider the demographics of the area &amp; time sessions accordingly</li> <li>• Greet people at the door &amp; explain the format, provide comments sheet</li> <li>• Give people a task eg. "good/bad" dots to place on the displays to record their preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates a wide variety of people</li> <li>• Break down perceived barriers</li> <li>• Fosters communication</li> <li>• More convenient for people</li> <li>• Engages people more effectively</li> <li>• Minimise aggressive approach to Council staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special interest groups may boycott or disrupt</li> <li>• Groups may use "dots" to lobby for special interests</li> <li>• Staff resource intensive</li> <li>• May not be accessible to people who rely on public transport</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback Register</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident pool for feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the register content is relative to your purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather input from a broad range of people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register maintenance can be resource intensive</li> </ul>

**TABLE 3 – Engagement techniques for INVOLVE level**

Consider techniques for INVOLVE level	Always Think It Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
<b>Printed Materials, Displays, Website, Briefings, Information Contact, Technical Assistance, Open House</b>	Refer to Tables 1 & 2	Refer to Tables 1 & 2	Refer to Tables 1 & 2
<b>Focus Groups</b> Use to test message with randomly selected people or to gain input to assist planning for engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear tasks</li> <li>• Relevant representation</li> <li>• Skilled facilitation</li> <li>• Don't assume a shared understanding of the topics being discussed. Check in with the participants to ensure understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides opportunity to test material</li> <li>• Verify prior assumptions</li> <li>• Raise unexpected additional benefits</li> <li>• Can be easily accessible to everyone, including people with low levels of literacy or other additional needs</li> <li>• Can be a good way of getting feedback from targeted groups, including young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants may feel restricted by the approach</li> <li>• May be perceived as exclusive</li> <li>• May be costly</li> </ul>
<b>Interviews</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to Face</li> <li>• Telephone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be clear &amp; open about the intent, process and estimated time of interview</li> <li>• Consider questions carefully to gather relevant information</li> <li>• Ensure effective information recording methods</li> <li>• Be inclusive</li> <li>• Be equitable</li> <li>• When interviewing young people, choose a public venue that young people feel comfortable in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather clear understanding of public concerns &amp; issues</li> <li>• Individuals feel inclined to provide input based on personalised format</li> <li>• Able to reach more people by varying timeframe for interviews</li> <li>• Accessible as can be conducted almost anywhere</li> <li>• Inclusive to everyone, including people with low levels of literacy or other additional needs</li> <li>• May appeal to individuals not confident speaking within a group</li> <li>• Can allow for sensitive issues to be discussed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be very time consuming</li> <li>• Participants can take their issues out on the interviewer</li> <li>• Participants are tired of being interviewed on a range of issues &amp; may not engage willingly</li> <li>• Timing, location and interviewer can have an impact on results</li> </ul>
<b>Workshops</b> Commence with presentation & allow for interaction in small groups with feedback to larger group to bring all the information together at the end of the workshop Can be delivered as part of larger forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know how you plan to use public input before the workshop</li> <li>• How you are going to manage the group – rules for engagement</li> <li>• Use trained facilitators &amp; give them clear instructions to ensure the aims of the workshop are achieved</li> <li>• How are you going to feedback outcomes of workshop to participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants can use the opportunity to raise their concerns, needs, issues</li> <li>• Foster equity and credibility</li> <li>• Opportunity to hear the “silent” voices</li> <li>• Special interest groups get to listen to other voices</li> <li>• Unexpected additional benefits</li> <li>• Relational benefits</li> <li>• Creative workshops may appeal to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small numbers of participants</li> <li>• Resistance to breaking up into small groups by some participants</li> <li>• Special Interest groups monopolise the workshop</li> <li>• Participants alter the agenda</li> <li>• Facilitators not impartial or not skilled enough to deal with some behaviours</li> <li>• Information session format used rather</li> </ul>

Consider techniques for INVOLVE level	Always Think It Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider creative workshops using alternative engagement methods including art based activities</li> </ul>	<p>particular groups including children and young people and people with a disability and may provide more meaningful ways for their contribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative workshops can provide opportunities to strengthen relationships with external agencies and community groups</li> </ul>	<p>than workshop format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback not recorded effectively</li> </ul>
<p><b>Field Trips</b></p> <p>Tour of project site or comparable site for stakeholders, elected members, community groups, media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up booking system to manage demand effectively</li> <li>Make accessible to diverse groups</li> <li>Provide itinerary/tour guide</li> <li>Plan question/answer session</li> <li>Plan refreshment break &amp; provide water during the trip</li> <li>Consider safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to develop rapport with stakeholders</li> <li>Increase knowledge of issues &amp; process for all involved</li> <li>Unexpected additional benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of participants can be limited by resource availability</li> <li>Intention can be misinterpreted</li> <li>Project site may reveal unintended conditions</li> <li>Aggrieved participant may take the opportunity to monopolise capture audience</li> </ul>

**TABLE 4 – Engagement techniques for COLLABORATE level**

Consider techniques for COLLABORATE level	Always Think It Through	What Can Go Right	What Can Go Wrong
<p><b>Council Advisory Committees with specific focus</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairperson needs to be engaging, clear and inclusive</li> <li>• There needs to be formal mechanism for Advisory Groups to feed directly into Council’s decision making process, otherwise it may be tokenistic</li> <li>• The Terms of Reference and focus of Advisory Group need to be clearly defined</li> <li>• Tasks/actions need to be outlined and carried out</li> <li>• Training should be provided to ensure that all committee members understand the protocols associated with formal groups</li> <li>• Consider ways of making the committee more inclusive for young people and ensure their participation is supported and meaningful. It is a good idea to invite at least two young people on committees so they can support each other and provide a broader youth perspective</li> <li>• Encourage young people to stay engaged by allocating them regular tasks and roles, for example consulting other young people</li> <li>• Consider providing certificates of participation for young people on advisory committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for larger number of representatives on specific issues and increases ‘representativeness’</li> <li>• Developing skills of larger number of people</li> <li>• Inclusion of young people can provide opportunities to work positively with Council and learn about Council processes and limitations</li> <li>• Detailed input can be gained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be costly – providing necessary assistance to these groups so they can overcome any barriers to participation (e.g. may include need for interpreters, childcare, assistance for disabled staff time for administration and support)</li> <li>• Participants may misunderstand their role as advisors, not decision makers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Working Groups</b> Short term groups that work on a specific project or plan. Can include community members, Council staff and community organisation representatives. Working groups support Council staff to plan and facilitate community consultations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairperson needs to be engaging, clear and inclusive</li> <li>• The Terms of Reference and focus of the Working Group need to be clearly defined</li> <li>• Tasks/actions need to be outlined and carried out</li> <li>• Provide appropriate induction and support for participants so that all group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assists planning and facilitation of community engagement</li> <li>• Provides an opportunity for community members to build their skills and experiences</li> <li>• Inclusion of young people can provide opportunities to work positively with Council and learn about Council processes and limitations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and organising working groups can take time and be resource intensive.</li> </ul>

Consider techniques for <b>COLLABORATE</b> level	<b>Always Think It Through</b>	<b>What Can Go Right</b>	<b>What Can Go Wrong</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>members understand their role and responsibilities</li> <li>Consider ways of making the group more inclusive for young people and ensure their participation is supported and meaningful</li> <li>Consider providing certificates of participation for young people on working groups</li> </ul>		
<b>Community representative on Council committees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Input is ongoing – this aids planning and other development processes</li> <li>Representatives, if they are not Councillors, are seen by community and Council as ‘independent’. Establishing Council Committees such as ‘Other Special Committees’ are referred to in Section 88 of the <i>Local Government Act (1989)</i></li> <li>Requires timely administration and individual liaison in particular the provision of minutes and reports to assist decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates Council’s commitment to citizen participation in decision making</li> <li>If combined with support, can develop skills of representative so they can develop skills of people in their own community</li> <li>Opportunities to develop multi-sector partnerships e.g.: public, private, Non Government and community partnerships and bring together different resources, skills and energies to respond to priority issues in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a limit to the number of community representatives who can be on a committee, so they are not able to represent everyone</li> <li>Costly to develop skills of representatives</li> <li>Can be costly to provide necessary administration and assistance to overcome barriers to participation such as interpreters, bilingual workers, assistance for sensory, disabled, childcare etc</li> </ul>

**TABLE 5 – Engagement techniques for EMPOWER level**

Consider techniques for <b>EMPOWER</b> level	<b>Always Think It Through</b>	<b>What Can Go Right</b>	<b>What Can Go Wrong</b>
<b>Mediation / Negotiation / Dialogue</b> Designed to create shared meanings through effective listening and reflective questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish firm guidelines</li> <li>Ensure the role of the mediator/negotiator &amp; participants are clear</li> <li>Seek commitment to the process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps participants towards an understanding of others viewpoint</li> <li>Forward thinking approach sets new directions</li> <li>Win/Win outcomes</li> <li>Promotes accountability on both sides</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be difficult to identify who the parties are &amp; who &amp; what they represent</li> <li>Time &amp; resource intensive</li> <li>Knowledge and skill base required to facilitate mediation/negotiation not acknowledged</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4 - IAP2 spectrum of public participation

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
<p><b>Public Participation Goal:</b></p> <p>To provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding of topic, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.</p>	<p><b>Public Participation Goal:</b></p> <p>To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions</p>	<p><b>Public Participation Goal:</b></p> <p>To work with the public throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.</p>	<p><b>Public Participation Goal:</b></p> <p>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including development of alternatives and identification of preferred solution.</p>	<p><b>Public Participation Goal:</b></p> <p>To place final decision making in the hands of the public.</p>
<p><b>Promise to the Public:</b></p> <p>We will keep you informed.</p>	<p><b>Promise to the Public:</b></p> <p>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision.</p>	<p><b>Promise to the Public:</b></p> <p>We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision.</p>	<p><b>Promise to the Public:</b></p> <p>We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.</p>	<p><b>Promise to the Public:</b></p> <p>We will implement what you decide.</p>
<p><b>Example techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact Sheets (FAQs)</li> <li>• Websites</li> <li>• Open Days</li> <li>• Media releases</li> <li>• Radio interviews</li> <li>• Council column</li> <li>• Phone information line</li> <li>• Community newsletters</li> <li>• Flyers</li> <li>• Project bulletin</li> <li>• Shire News</li> </ul>	<p><b>Example techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Listening posts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Example techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Deliberate polling</li> </ul>	<p><b>Example techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen Advisory Committees</li> <li>• Consensus building</li> <li>• Participatory decision-making</li> </ul>	<p><b>Example techniques</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen juries</li> <li>• Ballots</li> <li>• Delegated decisions</li> </ul>

## Appendix 5 – Engagement Action Plan

<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Contact person:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Key Messages</b>	<b>Level of Engagement and Engagement Methods</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Costs</b>
<p><b>Identify the target audience by considering the following:</b></p> <p><b>Who will benefit?</b></p> <p><b>Who are the key stakeholders?</b></p> <p><b>Who are the stakeholder groups and the target audience within them?</b></p>	<p><b>What do you intend to communicate to the target audience?</b></p> <p><b>What are key points the target audience need to understand and act upon?</b></p>	<p><b>Indicate which level of engagement you are aiming for: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower.</b></p> <p><b>What communication methods are most appropriate for each target audience considering the level of engagement?</b></p>	<p><b>Who will be responsible for implementing each method?</b></p>	<p><b>Specific dates and deadlines</b></p>	<p><b>What are the costs associated with each method?</b></p>

## Appendix 6 – Community Engagement Evaluation Plan Template

Purpose of evaluation	Key evaluation questions	Who is interested in the answers?	Sources of evidence	Methods of measurement	Who is responsible?	When
How successful was the engagement?						
What could we do better?						
What did we learn?						

## Appendix 7 – Mount Alexander Shire Community Engagement Policy

<b>Policy Category:</b>	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT		
<b>Title:</b>	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		
<b>Adoption Method:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> CEO	<input type="checkbox"/> Council	<b>Date Adopted:</b>
<b>Review Period:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<b>Date Last Reviewed:</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Director Economic and Social Development		<b>Next Review Date:</b>
<b>CEO Signature:</b>			<b>Date:</b>

### Purpose / Objective:

This policy outlines Council’s commitment to engaging with the community and its intent to ensure clear and thorough communication from the start to the end of each community engagement undertaking.

### Definition:

Community engagement is defined by the International Association for Public Participation Australasia (IAP2) as a two way process by which:

- the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of citizens and communities are incorporated at all levels and in all sectors in policy development, planning, decision-making, service delivery and assessment; and
- governments and other business and civil society organisations involve citizens, clients, communities and other stakeholders in these processes<sup>6</sup>

Community engagement and community consultation are not interchangeable terms. Consultation is one element of community engagement. The IAP2 has developed a public participation spectrum which shows levels of participation from minimum to maximum public impact. This spectrum has five stages of participation which are: inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.

### Who is Affected by this Policy?

This policy applies to Councillors, staff and consultants responsible for Community Engagement undertaken for or on behalf of Council.

### Background / Reasons for Policy:

Democratic governance exists when Council governs for and on behalf of its local community. Engagement between Council and the community aims to better understand the aspirations of communities and provides people with ways to have input into the processes of setting priorities and future directions for Council. Council needs to ensure that all groups in the Shire have an equal opportunity to participate and be engaged in Council processes.

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<sup>6</sup> IAP2 Brisbane Declaration <http://www.iap2.org.au/resources/un-declaration>

Good community engagement should:

- Lead to better decisions
- Ensure stronger community ownership
- Mean there is greater likelihood of sharing the benefits and reducing win/lose outcomes
- Build stronger relationship between Council and the community
- Encourage a significant number of stakeholders to participate
- Build community leadership and resilience.

**Scope:**

This policy refers to all community engagement processes undertaken by Council through Council's role as a service provider, planner, advocate, facilitator, law enforcer and regulatory body.

**Principles:**

The following principles have been developed to inform Council's community engagement practice.

**Genuine**

*Council will be upfront and explain the level of influence the community can have in the community engagement process and will highlight the negotiable and non-negotiable elements of any community engagement.*

**Focus and clarity**

*Council will provide clear statements about the focus and purpose of each community engagement activity.*

**Inclusiveness and accessibility**

*Council will facilitate processes for a diverse range of perspectives to be heard. Community engagement processes will recognise that there are a number of groups within the community who have particular requirements to enable them to participate effectively in engagement processes and will seek to accommodate and include these groups.*

**Provision of information and feedback**

*Council will provide sufficient, easy to read and accessible information so that community members are given the opportunity to provide informed input in the engagement. People participating in a community engagement process will be advised on issues of interest or concern and of the outcome.*

**Timing**

*Council will ensure that community engagement is timed so that results are able to influence the policy, planning and decision making process.*

**Transparency**

*Council is committed to open and transparent communication with the community to ensure meaningful input into Council's planning and prioritisation processes.*

**Evaluation**

*Council will evaluate community engagement processes against the goals as articulated in each community engagement plan.*

**Resourcing**

*Council will consider the effective resourcing for community engagement at the start of each new project.*

**Policy Content:**

1. All of Council's community engagement processes are in accordance with the principles outlined in this policy document.
2. Council's Community Engagement Framework is used to guide and inform the community engagement practice of Council.
3. All projects developed in accordance with Council's project management framework have a community engagement plan which is developed from the brief checklist in Council's Community Engagement Framework.
4. Council reports include discussion of community engagement that has taken place or planned in relation to the subject of the report and how this has informed the recommendations of the report.
5. Council commits to ongoing training of officers and Councillors to undertake effective community engagement.

**Related Documents:**

- Youth Engagement Charter
- Social Media Policy (draft)
- Staff values
- Customer Services Action Plan
- Community Engagement Framework
- Universal Access & Equity Policy
- Applicant Objector Meeting Policy

**Related Legislation:**

Victorian Charter of Human Rights

Local Government Act 1989 Section 3D

**References:**

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation <http://www.iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum>

## Appendix 8 – The Role of Councillors in Community Engagement

One of the most important roles of a Councillor is to participate in making policy and decision on behalf of their community.

Community expectations about decision-making processes have changed over time. The days of citizens electing representatives and leaving them to make decisions on their behalf during their term in office without being engaged in the process are long gone.

Increasingly, citizens expect to have some control over matters that affect their living environment, and to see governments actively telling them about what plans they have, and listening and responding to concerns about matters which impact on the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of their local community.

### Facilitating informed decision-making

Some issues to consider regarding Councillor roles in the Community Engagement process follow.

- It is prudent that Councillors not take an active “hands on” role in the Community Engagement process, but rather maintain a neutral position and be clearly seen as listening to what their community has to say.
- However, in circumstances where a Councillor has stated a position, it may be appropriate for a statement to be openly made that this is the case. This leaves it in the hands of the community to have input into swaying the strength of, or conviction to maintaining that stated position. In these cases, the argument for Councillors not having a hands on role during the Community Engagement process is strengthened, to avoid community perception of a biased process.

It is important to **maintain the integrity of an objective and unbiased Community Engagement process.**

Whilst it is difficult to make hard and fast rules about how to achieve this, some useful tips follow.

- During the Community Engagement planning phase, consider nominating suitably experienced staff, engaging specialist consultants, or inviting prominent citizens or community leaders to chair sessions or facilitate workshops with key stakeholder groups to identify the main issues and gauge their engagement expectations.
- On occasion it may be acceptable for Councillors to have more prominent roles in Community Engagement processes. Care needs to be taken however, that Councillors maintain the integrity of an objective and unbiased Community Engagement process as previously discussed.
- It may be appropriate for the Mayor to “chair” a process by playing a “master of ceremonies” role, but take care that this does not extend to a hands-on, facilitator role.
- The presence of Councillors during the information gathering phases, for example at Community Forums, demonstrates an interest in hearing what the community has to say, but they must clearly be seen as listening. Where they have particular information or facts to contribute, care should be taken by Councillors to provide information in an objective and non-defensive way.

Councillors ultimately need to consider the outcome of any Community Engagement process within the context of strategic planning directions for the whole Council area, resource and budgetary constraints and broader regional or State policies where relevant.

Having made a final decision, **community confidence will be enhanced by providing feedback to those who participated** about how their input was taken into account in the decision making process. Councillors have an important role in this regard, for example, the Mayor may convey messages verbally, in writing or through the media, which adds strength to the message that “we have listened and taken your views into account in our decision making”.

## Appendix 9 – Budget Template

A budget is essential and will assist in developing your selection of communication methods. Work out the costs associated with each method and the source of funding. Remember to factor in any costs for monitoring and evaluation and record the costs in the action plan.

Description	Amount
<b>DESIGN</b>	
Creative concepts/design	\$
Copy writing/editing	\$
Photography/Image purchasing	\$
<b>RESEARCH AND EVALUATION</b>	
Qualitative and quantitative research eg survey	\$
Concept testing eg focus groups	\$
Post Campaign Monitoring and Evaluation	\$
<b>PRODUCTION</b>	
<b>Printing</b>	
Pamphlet/Book/Brochure	\$
Flyer/Poster/Postcard	\$
Street poster/Sign	\$
Kit Folder	\$
Re-printing existing resources	\$
<b>Multimedia</b>	
Website	\$
Social Networking/MSS/SMS/Email database	\$
<b>INFORMATION SESSION/LAUNCH/PRESENTATION</b>	
Venue	\$
Catering	\$
Other	\$
<b>MEDIA BUYING</b>	
Print	\$
Radio	\$
Web	\$
Outdoor	\$
Direct Mail	\$
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	\$

## Appendix 10 – Youth Engagement Charter

The Mount Alexander Shire Youth Engagement Charter aims to guide Council when engaging young people within decision making processes.

The document has been written by young people within the Shire who have identified key terms to consider when engaging with young people within community consultations.

There are 11 guiding statements written by young people within the document which are matched with 11 commitment statements developed in a collaborative workshop between council staff and young people.

The statements sit underneath the following themes:

**Listen**

**Facilitate**

**Consider**

**Engage**

<p><b>Listen</b></p>	<p><b>Acknowledge young people’s thoughts and ideas.</b> Ensure young people are considered and acknowledged in all community consultations.</p> <p><b>Be honest and truthful.</b> Be direct and clear when speaking with young people and acknowledge when there are limits.</p> <p><b>Actively listen when communicating with young people.</b> Demonstrate that young people have been listened to and communicate what will happen next.</p>
<p><b>Facilitate</b></p>	<p><b>Plan consultations specifically for young people.</b> Support an ongoing Youth Advisory Group to consult with when engaging young people in decision making processes. The Youth Advisory Group should be involved in planning the consultation process with other young people.</p> <p><b>When consulting use spaces that young people feel comfortable in.</b> Ensure that youth specific consultations are held in youth orientated spaces.</p> <p><b>Choose appropriate times for young people to attend meetings.</b> Enable young people to have space in consultations away from adults. Consider times young people are available.</p>
<p><b>Consider</b></p>	<p><b>Consider how to take appropriate action after consultations.</b> Give feedback on the information that young people provide. Explain why things were taken on board or why they were not.</p> <p><b>Give young people the power to make their own decisions.</b> Provide support and information to young people in decision making positions.</p> <p><b>Consider how to cater for all young people's voices.</b> Ensure all communications with young people in the community are accessible and inclusive.</p>
<p><b>Engage</b></p>	<p><b>Hold informal discussions with young people within the community.</b> Use alternative methods to consult with young people; go to spaces where young people are and speak with them.</p> <p><b>Create different opportunities for young people to take part in so that the interests of all young people are reflected.</b> Aim to challenge Council’s understanding of young people and what they are interested in.</p>

## **Appendix 11 – Gender Equity Statement**

Mount Alexander Shire Council is committed to Gender Equity in the workplace and in the Shire. Gender Equity is equality of opportunity and the balanced participation of women and men in decision making in all areas of life. Mount Alexander Shire aims to ensure that women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all areas of life in the Shire, and believes that everyone, regardless of gender, has the right to work, to balance their career and personal life and to live without fear of abuse or violence.

Equality for men and women is a fundamental human right. Equal rights and opportunities are central to good governance.

Mount Alexander Shire Council will consider the impact gender has on all policies and programs so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men.